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Ray-Chronology

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By The Associated Press

Key dates in James Earl Ray's life:

March 10, 1928 -- Born in Alton, Ill.

1967 -- Escapes from the Missouri State Penitentiary where he was serving time for robbery and being a habitual criminal.

April 4, 1968 -- Martin Luther King Jr. is slain at The Lorraine Motel in Memphis. Race riots follow in more than 100 cities.

June 1968 -- Ray is captured in London, England, in connection with the King slaying.

March 1969 -- Ray pleads guilty in Memphis to the King assassination and is sentenced to 99 years in prison. He recants three days later.

1978 -- The U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations concludes there was a conspiracy to kill King. The panel says Ray shot King, but a St. Louis-based conspiracy of racial bigots was behind the slaying.

1991 -- Ray releases a book, "Who Killed Martin Luther King? The True Story by the Alleged Assassin," in which he claims his guilty plea was coerced and his court appearance was a sham.

March 1993 -- A mock Ray trial is held on the HBO cable TV channel. He is acquitted.

December 1993 -- Former Memphis businessman Loyd Jowers claims he was paid by a former associate to hire a hit man to kill King, and it was not Ray. Prosecutors discount the claim.

April 1994 -- A Memphis judge allows Ray's attorney to call witnesses and present evidence in court to try to prove Ray's innocence.